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A master spy but not a traitor.

ESPIONAGE AMONG FRIENDS

IT IS VINTAGE Le Carré, of course. Only John Cornwell (alias: Le Carré) could have dreamed up this cast and plot. August in Bonn—Le Carré's *Small Town in Germany*. West German counterespionage—Department IV of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution—is hot on the tracks of two moles smuggled into West Germany 20 years ago by the East German secret service: the dreaded Department of Enlightenment (*Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*) in the Ministry for State Security. The woman all Bonn knew as "Sonja Lüneburg," for 12 years a genial senior secretary to economics minister and Free Democratic Party leader Martin Bangemann, and another top secretary mole, "Ursula Richter," escape in the nick of time. But then events take a characteristically Le Carré turn. Suddenly, amazingly, the East German news agency announces that the head of Department IV has himself fled to East Berlin and asked for asylum. Was Hans Joachim Tiedge a supermole? Or did he just flee in panic from an insufferable burden of debt, alcoholism, personal problems, and—the last straw—the departure of his boss and "protector," the head of the Federal Office? As the Department of Enlightenment gently wrings all the sweaty secrets of West German counterespionage out of the gross, alcohol-sodden frame of Hans Joachim Tiedge, yet another top-level mole is arrested in Bonn. Fifty-year-old spinster Margarete Hoeke, a senior secretary in the Federal president's office, admits to having spied for East Germany for 15 years. She must have told them in graphic detail about the Federal Republic's wartime contingency plannings: she was there in the government's top secret nuclear bunker during NATO's "Wintex" exercise, she saw the minutes of the top secret Federal Security Council. So the champagne corks are popping in the Department of Enlightenment, as another spine-chilling cliff-hanger from the king of spy writers moves to its climax. . . .

Well, forget Le Carré if you can. This is real life and a deeply serious business, not least for those West German agents across Eastern Europe who must now be trembling for their lives. It is one of a very few businesses in which East Germany leads the world. And it is a business—no, an industry—from which the whole Soviet bloc stands to make growing political, economic, and military profits over the next decade.

TRUE, the defectors go both ways through the Berlin Wall (spies are about the only people who can travel freely from Germany to Germany). In 1979, for example, one Lt. Werner Stiller brought the West Germans an extensive file on his former employer, the Ministry for State Security. Thanks to his efforts, some 40 East German agents were blown. But Stiller's bag of secret documents revealed just how extensive the East German surveillance and infiltration is. It includes not just West Germany's political and military establishments, but also most of its key industries: armaments, information technology, nuclear power, electronics, chemicals. The head of the aircraft-engineering department at Messerschmitt-Bülkow-Blohm, West Germany's largest arms manufacturer and a main contractor for the Tornado fighter, was exposed only last autumn. He passed his information directly to the KGB; but he had been recruited in East Berlin by the Ministry for State Security—in 1954. One expert guesstimate puts the number of Soviet bloc agents working in West German high-tech industries at about 1,000, and most of them, for obvious reasons, are Germans recruited by East Berlin. Stiller's bag revealed that no fewer than four of the Department of Enlightenment's 15 main divisions are devoted to science and technology.

Here is the first, fundamental, and growing asymmetry between Eastern and Western espionage: the difference in what the two sides can hope to learn. As the technology gap widens between East and West, there is more and more that the Eastern bloc can hope—and needs—to discover by spying. Thus, even if the two sides did precisely the same thing with the same professional efficiency, there would still be more in it for the East. But there are good reasons for believing that in any case the East does this one thing better.

The basic advantages of the Department of Enlightenment may be summarized as the Three Cs: coordination, continuity, and a closed society. Unlike the West German services, divided between the Federal Intelligence Service (roughly corresponding to the CIA) in Bavaria and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Cologne, the Department of Enlightenment is an integral part of one massive security apparatus. Its 1,000 to 1,500 central staff officers work from the forbidding headquarters of the Ministry for State Security in the east end of East Berlin, not far from the memorial to Rosa Luxemburg. Not merely are they all trusted members of the ruling communist party; they actually have their own separate "provincial committee" in the party organization. On the 30th anniversary of the Ministry, party leader Erich Honecker praised their "important party work on the foremost front of the class struggle." You do not need much imagination to guess what would happen to an East German Tiedge who drank too heavily or got into debt. (The Ministry has its own prisons.)

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Whereas the West German services have had several bosses, and the top jobs have sometimes changed with the parties in power, the Department of Enlightenment has been led for more than 30 years by General Markus "Mischa" Wolf—son of a distinguished communist playwright, graduate of the Comintern school in Kushnarenkovo (the Eton of international communism), former Red Army officer, and probably still a Soviet citizen, by all accounts a man of exceptional intelligence, culture, sophistication, wit, and coldness.

Finally, Wolf has all the obvious advantages of a closed society facing an open one. Throughout the 1950s he was able to pass his moles freely into the West—and who could detect them among the hundreds of thousands of genuine refugees from communism? Among them were the Messerschmitt spy and Günter Guillaume, the top Social Democratic aide whose exposure in 1974 led to the resignation of Chancellor Willy Brandt. Guillaume had "fled from communism" in 1956. At the same time, Wolf started one of his most successful lines: the secretary moles. Realizing that senior secretaries often have access to a great deal of useful and confidential information, without being subjected to the same degree of security scrutiny as their employers, Wolf sent in a number of women agents with the specific task of becoming secretaries in key government offices and political organizations. Among them: "Sonja Lüneburg" and "Ursula Richter."

WITH THE BUILDING of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, the export of moles must have become more difficult, since only a few thousand East Germans in all now managed to escape to the West every year. But more recently things have become easier again, since one of the central objectives of Bonn's *Deutschlandpolitik*, under both the Schmidt and the Kohl governments, has been precisely to increase the possibilities for East Germans to come to the West. A record 40,000 came across last year. Indeed, the Bonn government actually pays the East German regime considerable sums each year for the release of political prisoners to the West. We cannot exclude the possibility that, besides genuine dissenters, these include a few carefully planted spies. No other Soviet bloc leader is in Erich Honecker's enviable position of being able to export his dissidents for hard currency. What if he can export his own spies for hard currency as well!

In the meantime, General Wolf has reinforced his secret army (estimates of its total size range from 3,000 to 20,000) with the help of the two oldest weapons in the book: love and money. The idea of "East German Romeos" sounds inherently improbable, even a contradiction in terms, like "sweet-smelling pigs." But "East German Romeos" it is who have captured the hearts and official secrets of a whole troop of lonesome Bonn Juliets. This is apparently how Margarete Hoeke was recruited 15 years ago.

As for the money, it seems that much of this now goes to West German students, young managers, or scientists, who are paid on a regular basis—say, $135 a month, and perhaps a car thrown in. In return, they find jobs in industries of interest to the Department of Enlightenment. They may go on receiving this scout's stipend for years, as they work their way up in their chosen company, without giving information of any immediate value. But in the long term, the heavy investment that the department started to make in this area in the 1970s will probably pay the kind of dividend that that Messerschmitt manager was able to pay after 30 years.

BUT ARE YOUNG West Germans so easily persuaded to betray their country—for what is, by West German standards, a good deal less than 30 pieces of silver? Is there no West German patriotism? Curiously, the terms "patriotism" and "treason" have been conspicuously absent from the West German discussion of the Tiedge affair. It has generated none of the kind of moral alarm at the fact of treason heard in Britain over Philby or Blunt, and in the United States over the Walker case.

You might expect the arch-conservative Franz-Jozef Strauss to sound this note. Not a bit of it. Strauss said he was critical of the leadership of West German agencies, but "not of the activities of spies and agents." An honorable profession, then? You might expect him to have a few choice insults for the East German spy masters. Wrong again. Instead, he hastened off to meet Erich Honecker at the Leipzig Trade Fair, and to emphasize, by every word and gesture, that the improvement of relations between the two German states should not in any way be hindered by what Honecker, for his part, delicately referred to as recent "turbulences." In this, as in few other fields, Strauss was at one with most of West Germany's political establishment—conservative, liberal, and social democrat. Even the left-liberal press praised him. Moles and defectors come and go: the *Deutschlandpolitik* remains.

Meanwhile, it is left to the Americans to wonder out loud just how much damage has been done to Western security interests, and what the larger implications are for, say, the future sharing of Star Wars technology. How many secretary moles are still in place, ready and waiting to pass it on? Herr Waldemar Schreckenberger, the responsible secretary of state, soothingly observes that "our allies have always shown understanding for West Germany's heightened danger situation in a divided country." This may be a diplomatic way of saying: "Don't worry, the CIA is not so stupid as to tell us much anyway!" Yet so long as West Germany remains the front line of NATO, the military-technological pickings for the Department of Enlightenment are bound to be abundant. And whereas Britain has expelled 150 Soviet spies since 1970 (31 following the recent defection of London KGB chief Oleg Gordiyevsky), West Germany has expelled only five.

What Bonn is saying in effect (and perhaps only half-consciously) is this: "We will do everything we reasonably can to preserve the security of the West, and we will tighten up our own secret services as best we ever can, but what we will *not* do is sacrifice to that end any single one of our precious, fragile links with the other Germany. If General Wolf's spy trade is growing along with 'inner-German relations,' then so be it: we are not going to kill the dog to starve the fleas." This can be irritating to its allies (who also get bitten by the fleas), but if we are irritated we should ask ourselves one question: Is this not a price worth paying to keep West Germany, still so intensely (and, yes, patriotically) preoccupied with its other half, as a relatively happy and loyal member of the Western alliance? Perhaps it is, considering the alternatives. Or, to take the question from another angle: In the long run, can the formidable efficiency of General Wolf's spy industry really do that much to compensate for the even more formidable inefficiency of the rest of the Soviet system?

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